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Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the twenty-fifth special session of the General Assembly

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Supplement No. 3 (A/S-25/7/Rev.1)

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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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Chapter I
Introduction

1. At the 1st plenary meeting of its twenty-fifth special session, on 6 June 2001, the General Assembly established an Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the twenty-fifth special session and elected German Garcia-Duran (Colombia) Chairman by acclamation.

2. The Ad Hoc Committee held three meetings, on 6, 7, 8 and 9 June 2001, to hear representatives of United Nations programmes and other entities in the United Nations system, including funds, specialized agencies and regional commissions, as well as local authorities, non-governmental organizations and other Habitat Agenda partners, and to consider the question of review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (agenda item 8), further actions and initiatives for overcoming obstacles to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (agenda item 9) and the declaration on cities and other human settlements in the new millennium (agenda item 10).

3. At its 1st meeting, on 6 June, the Ad Hoc Committee elected, by acclamation, Seydou Sy Sall (Senegal), Manfred Konukiewitz (Germany) and Andrzej Olszówka (Poland) as Vice-Chairmen and Alireza Esamaeilzadeh (Islamic Republic of Iran) as Rapporteur.

4. In connection with its consideration of agenda items 8, 9 and 10, the Ad Hoc Committee had before it the report of the Commission on Human Settlements acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)[1] and the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements on the review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (A/S-25/3 and Add.1).

5. At the 1st meeting, the representative of Chile made a statement on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

6. Statements were also made by a representative of the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities and a Habitat Goodwill Ambassador.

7. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on adequate housing.

8. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the World Health Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the International Labour Organization and the World Bank.

9. A representative of the non-governmental organization Forum of Researchers on Human Settlements also made a statement.

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Special Session, Supplement No. 2* (A/S-25/2).

10. At the 2nd meeting, on 7 June, statements were made by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

11. A member of the United Nations Task Force on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction also made a statement.

12. At the same meeting, statements were made by representatives of the following non-governmental organizations: International Council of Women, Forum of Researchers on Human Settlements of the Centro di Ricerca e Documentazione Febbraio 74 (CERFE), David M. Kennedy Centre for International Studies, Grass Roots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood, Global Compliance Research Project, Cohort for Research on Environment, Urban Management and Human Settlements, International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Services, International Alliance of Women, International Cooperative Alliance, Caucus for the Advancement of the Billings Ovulation Method, Arc-Peace, Commonwealth Human Ecology Council, Canadian Housing Renewal Association and Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements.

Chapter II

Action taken by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole

13. At the 3rd meeting, on 9 June, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole considered its draft report (A/S-25/AC.1/L.1 and Add.1-5) and the draft resolution submitted by the Chairman entitled "Declaration on cities and other human settlements in the new millennium" (A/S-25/AC.1/L.2).

14. At the same meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole adopted its report and recommended that the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/S-25/AC.1/L.2 (see para. 15 below).

Chapter III
Recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole

15. The Ad Hoc Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium

The General Assembly

Adopts the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium annexed to the present resolution.

Annex

Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium

We, the representatives of Governments, being guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, meeting at this special session of the General Assembly to review the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, to recognize progress, and to identify obstacles and emerging issues, reaffirm our will and commitment to implement fully the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements[2] and the Habitat Agenda[3] and decide on further initiatives, in the spirit of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.[4] The Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda will remain the basic framework for sustainable human settlements development in the years to come.

Therefore, we:

A

Renewing the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

1. Reaffirm that human beings are at the centre of our concern for sustainable development and that they are the basis for our actions in implementing the Habitat Agenda;

2. Wish to stress that this is a special moment in the development of human settlements, when half of the world's six billion people will be living in cities and the world is facing unprecedented growth of urban population, mainly in the developing world. The decisions we make now will have far-reaching consequences. We note with great concern that one out of four of the world's urban population is living below the poverty line. In many cities, confronted with rapid growth, environmental problems and the slow pace of economic development, it has not been possible to meet the challenges of generating sufficient employment, providing adequate housing and meeting the basic needs of the citizens;

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[2] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[3] Ibid., annex II.

[4] Resolution 55/2.

3. Re-emphasize that rural and urban areas are economically, socially and environmentally interdependent, and that cities and towns are engines of growth contributing to the development of both rural and urban human settlements. Half of the world's inhabitants live in rural settlements, and, in Africa and Asia, the population in the rural areas represents a majority. Integrated physical planning and balanced attention to rural and urban living conditions are of crucial importance for all nations. Full advantage must be taken of the complementary contributions and linkages between rural and urban areas, by giving appropriate attention to their different economic, social and environmental requirements. While addressing urban poverty, it is also essential to eradicate rural poverty and to improve living conditions, as well as to create employment and educational opportunities in rural settlements and small and medium-sized cities and towns in rural areas;

4. Reconfirm our determination to address at all levels the deteriorating environmental conditions that threaten the health and quality of life of billions of people. Some activities at the local level that degrade the environment have implications at the global level and need to be addressed in the context of human settlements;

5. Reconfirm the goals and principles of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world, as set out in the Habitat Agenda,[5] which form the basis of our commitments;

6. Renew and reaffirm our commitments in the Habitat Agenda concerning adequate shelter for all, sustainable human settlements, enablement and participation, gender equality, financing shelter and human settlements, international cooperation, and assessing progress;

B

Welcoming progress in implementing the Habitat Agenda

7. Commend the efforts by all levels of government, the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations and Habitat Agenda partners as well as those by the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and welcome the progress made thus far towards implementation of the Habitat Agenda. We note with appreciation the national and regional reports on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda[6] and the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) on the review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda,[7] taking into account the specific priorities and objectives of each region, and in conformity with the legal framework and national policies of each country;

8. Welcome the decision by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-sixth session[8] that the Special Rapporteur whose mandate will focus on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living should, as a part of his mandate, develop a regular dialogue and discuss possible areas of collaboration with Governments, relevant United Nations bodies, specialized

[5] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 25.

[6] The reports were provided to participants in the special session as resource documents.

[7] A/S-25/3.

[8] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 3* and corrigendum (E/2000/23 and Corr.1), chap. II, sect. A, resolution 2000/9.

agencies, international organizations in the field of housing rights, including the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), non-governmental organizations and international financial institutions, and make recommendations on the realization of the rights relevant to the mandate;

9. Also take note with satisfaction of the growing awareness of the need to address in an integrated manner poverty, homelessness, unemployment, lack of basic services, exclusion of women and of children and marginalized groups, including indigenous communities, and social fragmentation in order to achieve better, more liveable and inclusive human settlements worldwide. Governments, international organizations and members of civil society have made continuous efforts to address these problems;

10. Take note of the development of integrated and participatory approaches to urban environmental planning and management in relation to the implementation of Agenda 21. In this regard we welcome the support provided by many Governments to mechanisms for consultations and partnerships among interested parties to prepare and implement local environmental plans and local Agenda 21 initiatives;

11. Welcome the increasing economic role of cities and towns in our globalizing world and the progress made in forging public-private partnerships and strengthening small and microenterprises. Cities and towns hold the potential to maximize the benefits and to offset the negative consequences of globalization. Well-managed cities can provide an economic environment capable of generating employment opportunities as well as offering a diversity of goods and services;

12. Welcome the efforts made so far by many developing countries in effecting decentralization in the management of cities as a means of strengthening the operation of the local authorities in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

13. Also welcome the contributions of national and other Governments, which have the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda through their laws, policies and programmes;

14. Appreciate the important contribution made by local authorities worldwide in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda through concerted efforts and strengthened partnerships between Governments at all levels, resulting in the improved condition of human settlements, including improved urban governance. Broad-based participation in decision-making, together with accountability, simplicity of procedures and transparency, is imperative to prevent corruption and to promote public interests. In this regard, we note with satisfaction the increased priority given to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and to the principles of good governance at all levels;

15. Recognize the important work done by the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. At the same time, we encourage them to continue promoting the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

16. Recognize that the overall thrust of the new strategic vision of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and its emphasis on the two global campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance are strategic points of entry for the effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda, especially for guiding international cooperation on adequate shelter for all and sustainable human

settlements development. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of the Advisory Committee of Local Authorities and express our appreciation for its contributions to the work of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the preparation of the special session of the General Assembly;

C

Recognizing gaps and obstacles

17. Take note with great concern of the current conditions of human settlements worldwide, especially as documented in the third *Global Report on Human Settlements 2001*. Although Governments and their Habitat Agenda partners have continued efforts to fulfil their commitments, widespread poverty remains the core obstacle and environmental conditions need significant improvement in many countries. Critically, the majority of people living in poverty still lack legal security of tenure for their dwellings, while others lack even basic shelter. Thus, serious impediments to sustainable human settlements development still persist;

18. Note with concern that one of the basic obstacles to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda is the discrepancy between commitments made at Istanbul and the political will to fulfil them. We also acknowledge the gaps in both public information and awareness-raising as impediments;

19. Recognize that serious financial constraints give rise to acute problems of adequate shelter, housing and human settlements in countries that receive an influx of refugees resulting from ongoing conflicts, human-made and natural disasters and other calamities taking place in neighbouring countries;

20. Acknowledge the gaps in shelter and urban policies that have limited the opportunities for participation and partnership and have made it difficult to convert best practices into good policies. We are also deeply concerned that many women still do not participate fully on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, while at the same time suffering to a greater extent the effects of poverty;

21. Also acknowledge the fact that the urbanization process in the world has resulted in metropolitan concentrations that extend over the administrative boundaries of the original cities, expand over two or more administrative units, have local authorities with different capacities and priorities and suffer an absence of coordination;

22. Recognize major obstacles that prevent the efficient functioning of land and housing markets to ensure an adequate supply of shelter. Actions recommended in paragraph 76 of the Habitat Agenda[3] have not been fully implemented;

23. Have identified considerable obstacles associated with limited economic, technological and institutional capacities at all levels of government, particularly in the developing and the least developed countries. We recognize the absence of comprehensive and inclusive policies for capacity-building institutions and their networking;

24. Have also identified economic policies and financial market constraints at all levels that have prevented the mobilization of adequate resources to meet many countries' sustainable human settlements needs;

25. Recognize that domestic resource mobilization as well as sound national policies are crucial for financing shelter and human settlements. Although

Governments have the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, international support is likewise essential. We regret that international cooperation in shelter and human settlements development has not been enhanced significantly since 1996, which is a growing cause for concern. We also regret that many countries have been unable to make sufficient use of market mechanisms in support of their financial needs for shelter and human settlements development;

26. Recognize that there is unequal access to information and communication technologies, particularly in the developing countries, which has resulted in the inability of Governments and Habitat Agenda partners to make the best use of this resource in implementing the Habitat Agenda;

27. Further resolve to take concerted action against international terrorism, which causes serious obstacles to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

28. Recognize that the consequences of these gaps and obstacles are serious: for the first time in human history a majority of the world's six billion people will live in cities. Many people have experienced a deterioration, not an improvement, in their living environment. The gaps and obstacles encountered in the past five years have slowed down global progress towards sustainable human settlements development. It is essential that actions are taken to ensure that the Habitat Agenda is now translated into policy and into practice in every country;

D

Taking further actions

29. Affirm our commitment to overcoming obstacles encountered in implementing the Habitat Agenda, especially poverty, which we consider to be the major underlying factor, and to strengthening and safeguarding national and international enabling environments, and to this end pledge to accelerate our efforts to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Determined to give new momentum to our efforts to improve the human settlements condition, we here set out further initiatives for achieving those ends. At the start of the new millennium, aware of our responsibilities towards future generations, we are strongly committed to adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in a urbanizing world. We invite people from all countries and from all walks of life, as well as the international community, to join in renewed dedication to our shared vision for a more just and equitable world;

30. Reaffirm that the family is the basic unit of society and as such should be strengthened. It is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support. In different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of the family exist. Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses, and husband and wife should be equal partners. The rights, capabilities and responsibilities of family members must be respected. Human settlements planning should take into account the constructive role of the family in the design, development and management of such settlements. Society should facilitate, as appropriate, all necessary conditions for its integration, reunification, preservation, improvement and protection within adequate shelter and with access to basic services and a sustainable livelihood;[9]

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[9] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 31.

31. Resolve in the framework inter alia of a poverty eradication strategy to encourage social and economic policies that are designed to meet the housing needs of families and their individual members, with particular attention to the care of children;[10]

32. Also resolve to promote changes in attitudes, structures, policies, laws and other practices relating to gender in order to eliminate all obstacles to human dignity and equality in family and society and to promote full and equal participation of women and men, inter alia, in the formulation, implementation and follow-up of public policies and programmes;[11]

33. Invite Governments, the United Nations and other international organizations to strengthen the quality and consistency of their support to poverty eradication and sustainable human settlements development, in particular to the least developed countries. This in turn requires not only renewed political will, but also the mobilization and allocation of new and additional resources at both the national and international levels. We urge the strengthening of international assistance to developing countries in their efforts to alleviate poverty, including by creating an enabling environment that would facilitate the integration of developing countries into the world economy, improving their market access, facilitating the flow of financial resources and implementing fully and effectively all initiatives already launched regarding debt relief;

34. Emphasize that the international community should consider further measures, as appropriate, that would lead to durable solutions to the external debt burden of developing countries;

35. In this connection, express our appreciation to the developed countries that have agreed to and have reached the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for overall official development assistance, and call upon developed countries that have not yet done so to strengthen their efforts to achieve the agreed target of 0.7 per cent as soon as possible and, where agreed, within that target, to earmark 0.15 per cent to 0.20 per cent of the gross national product for the least developed countries;

36. Request the international community to strongly support poverty eradication, and welcome the ongoing consultations by the Secretary-General on the establishment of a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication to finance and realize, inter alia, the social policies and programmes of the Habitat Agenda to address challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in developing countries, especially the least developed countries, bearing in mind the voluntary nature of the contributions;

37. Resolve to raise awareness about human settlements challenges and solutions through full and open dissemination of information and commit ourselves to renew and foster political will at all levels;

38. Also resolve to empower the poor and vulnerable, inter alia through promoting greater security of tenure and enabling better access to information and good practices, including awareness of legal rights. We aim to develop specific policies for overcoming growing urban poverty;

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[10] Ibid., para. 40 (k).

[11] Ibid., para. 119 (e).

39. Further resolve to empower local authorities, non-governmental organizations and other Habitat Agenda partners, within the legal framework and according to the conditions of each country, to play a more effective role in shelter provision and in sustainable human settlements development. This can be achieved through effective decentralization, where appropriate, of responsibilities, policy management, decision-making authority and sufficient resources, where possible including revenue-collection authority to local authorities, through participation and local democracy as well as through international cooperation and partnerships. In particular, the effective role of women in decision-making in local authorities should be ensured, if necessary through appropriate mechanisms. In this context we agree to intensify our dialogue, where possible, including, inter alia, through the Commission on Human Settlements on all issues related to effective decentralization and strengthening of local authorities, in support of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, in conformity with the legal framework and policies of each country;

40. Encourage authorities within metropolitan areas to develop mechanisms and to foster, as appropriate, legal, financial, administrative, planning and coordination instruments in order to achieve more equitable, ordered and functional cities;

41. Resolve to build capacities and networks to enable all partners to play an effective role in shelter and human settlements development. The management of urbanization processes requires strong and accountable public institutions able to provide an effective framework in which everybody has access to basic services. Capacity-building needs to be directed towards, inter alia, supporting decentralization and participatory urban management processes. We also pledge to strengthen the institutions and legal frameworks that assist and allow broad-based participation in decision-making and in the implementation of human settlements strategies, policies and programmes;

42. Acknowledge, value and support volunteer work and the work of community-based organizations. Voluntary practices offer an important contribution to the development of human settlements, as they help to build strong, cohesive communities, as well as to develop a sense of social solidarity, generating in the process significant economic outputs;

43. Are committed to improving prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response capacities with the contribution of national and international cooperation networks, in order to reduce the vulnerability of human settlements to natural and human-made disasters and to implement effective post-disaster programmes for the affected human settlements, aimed, inter alia, at meeting immediate needs, reducing future disaster risks and making rebuilt human settlements accessible for all;

44. Commit ourselves to the goal of gender equality in human settlements development and resolve to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty and to stimulate the development of human settlements that are truly sustainable. We further commit ourselves to formulating and strengthening policies and practices to promote the full and equal participation of women in human settlements planning and decision-making;

45. Also commit ourselves to strengthening existing financial mechanisms and identifying and developing appropriate innovative approaches for financing

shelter and human settlements development at all levels. Furthermore, we resolve to continue to undertake legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and the ownership of land and other property, credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies, as well as ensuring their right to security of tenure and to enter into contractual agreements. We resolve to promote increased and equal access for all people to open, efficient, effective and appropriate housing finance, to support savings mechanisms in the informal sector, where appropriate, and to strengthen regulatory and legal frameworks and financial management capacity at all appropriate levels;

46. Resolve to promote the upgrading of slums and regularization of squatter settlements, within the legal framework of each country. In particular, we reiterate the aim of the Cities without Slums initiatives to make a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020;

47. Affirm that, in the interest of affordable housing for the poor, it is necessary to promote cooperation among countries for popularizing the use of adequate low-cost and sustainable building materials and appropriate technology for the construction of adequate low-cost houses and services within the reach of the poor, especially in slums and unplanned settlements;

48. Resolve to intensify efforts to include countries with economies in transition in the system of multilateral cooperation in sustainable development of human settlements, by developing the support for these countries to determine an adequate level of decentralization in the governance of urban and rural human settlements. We reiterate our commitment to involve in these efforts the United Nations financial institutions, international and national foundations, the private sector and other partners of the Habitat Agenda;

49. Take note with satisfaction of the ongoing housing policy formulation by many countries. We resolve to undertake legislative and administrative reforms needed to support the efforts of people, individually and collectively, to produce affordable shelter, to adopt proactive planning of land supply, to promote the efficient functioning of land markets and administration, to eradicate legal and social barriers to the equal and equitable access to land and to ensure that the equal rights of women and men to land and property are protected under the law. In implementing the above, we acknowledge the need for vigorously promoting affordable shelter and basic services for the homeless, preventing forced evictions that are contrary to the law and facilitating access of all people, particularly the poor and vulnerable groups, to information on housing legislation, including any legal rights, and to remedies where these laws are violated. In this connection, we note with appreciation and support the initial approach and activities of the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure;

50. See the implementation of the Habitat Agenda as an integral part of the overall fight for the eradication of poverty. The implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the pursuit of sustainable development are intimately linked and interdependent, and human settlements development is a key factor for sustainable development. The World Summit for Sustainable Development to be held at Johannesburg in 2002 provides a good opportunity to further pursue and intensify this relationship;

51. Resolve to intensify efforts for ensuring transparent, responsible, accountable, just, effective and efficient governance of cities and other human settlements. We recognize that good governance, within each country and at the international level, is essential to addressing the challenge of urban poverty as well as the challenge of environmental degradation and to harnessing the potential opportunities offered by globalization. Cities need specific approaches and methodologies to improve governance, to plan and act strategically in order to reduce urban poverty and social exclusion and to improve the economic and social status of all citizens and protect the environment in a sustainable way. In connection with this, we note the importance of promoting sustainable livelihoods through education and training, particularly for the poor and vulnerable groups;

52. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has developed in a much faster and much more dramatic way than could have been foreseen at Istanbul. We resolve to intensify efforts at the international and national levels against HIV/AIDS and in particular to formulate and implement appropriate policies and actions to address the impact of HIV/AIDS on human settlements. We recognize the problem of accessing financial resources for housing by HIV/AIDS victims and the need for shelter solutions for accommodating HIV/AIDS victims, especially the orphans and the terminally ill;

53. Resolve to intensify efforts to enhance the role of youth and civil society, and to increase cooperation with parliamentarians in human settlements development;

54. Also resolve to promote more determined action against urban crime and violence, particularly violence against women, children and the elderly, through a coordinated response at all levels, in accordance, as appropriate, with integrated crime prevention action plans. These plans might include a diagnostic survey of crime phenomena, the identification of all the relevant actors in crime prevention and the fight against crime, the establishment of consultation mechanisms for the design of a coherent strategy and the elaboration of possible solutions to these problems;

55. Further resolve to seriously address the challenges posed by wars, conflicts, refugees and human-made disasters on human settlements, and commit ourselves through enhanced international cooperation mechanisms to support post-conflict and post-disaster countries, with special emphasis on the provision of shelter and other basic services, particularly to vulnerable groups, refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as to facilitate restoring security of tenure and property rights;

56. Resolve to take further effective measures to remove obstacles to the full implementation of the Habitat Agenda as well as obstacles to the realization of the rights of the peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, which are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and must be combated and eliminated;

57. Also resolve to expand and strengthen the protection of civilians in conformity with international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, including article 49 thereof;[12]

[12] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

58. Resolve to strengthen international cooperation, including the burden sharing in, and the coordination of humanitarian assistance to, countries hosting refugees and to help all refugees and displaced persons to return voluntarily to their homes, in safety and dignity, and to be smoothly reintegrated in their societies;

59. Resolve to promote access to safe drinking water for all and to facilitate the provision of basic infrastructure and urban services, including adequate sanitation, waste management and sustainable transport which is integrated and accessible to all, including people with disabilities. To this end, we need to promote transparent and accountable management of public services as well as partnerships with the private sector and non-profit organizations for the delivery of these services;

60. Commit ourselves to intensifying efforts for improving sustainable environmental planning and management practices, and for promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns in human settlements in all countries, in particular in industrialized countries. Integrated approaches addressing social, economic and environmental issues should be taken more systematically at all levels. Agenda 21 and the local Agenda 21 initiatives provide important inputs to this process;

61. Reiterate the need to integrate the local Agenda 21 process, as mentioned above, in the global plan of action for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The aims, policies and strategies of both agendas should be harmonized in order to promote sustainable urban planning and management;

62. Also reiterate that Governments, local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners should regularly monitor and evaluate their own performances, and in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda Governments at all levels should identify and disseminate best practices and apply shelter and human settlements development indicators. To this end, we need to strengthen the capacity among all Habitat Agenda partners to handle and analyse information as well as to communicate with each other;

63. A further goal is to translate best practices into policies and permit their replication. In this respect, the international community should ensure the effective formatting and dissemination of proven best practices and policies;

64. Recognizing that those living in poverty are in fact rich in innovative faculties and the importance of microcredit in eradicating poverty and improving human settlements, and following success stories of some countries in this field, we encourage Governments, within their legal framework, and both national and international financial institutions to strengthen the institutional frameworks by which it would be possible to extend microcredit to those living in poverty, particularly the women, without collateral or security;

65. Reiterate that international cooperation takes on added significance and importance in the light of recent trends towards the increased globalization and interdependence of the world economy. There is a need for the political will of all States and for specific action at the international level, including among cities, to inspire, encourage and strengthen existing and innovative forms of cooperation and partnership, coordination at all levels and increased investment from all sources, including the private sector, in order to contribute effectively to the improvement of shelter conditions, especially in developing countries. In this regard we also resolve

to pay particular attention to cities and other human settlements in critical natural environments such as arid and semi-arid areas with the purpose of providing assistance and support for their development;

66. Reconfirm the role of the Commission on Human Settlements and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in advocating, promoting, monitoring and assessing progress made in implementing the goals of adequate shelter for all through providing legal security of tenure and sustainable human settlements development in all countries and in combining best practices, enabling policies, and compiling legislation and action plans for identifying illustrative cities for the two global campaigns and further advancing the normative[13] debate and operational action on major human settlements issues, inter alia, by timely and regular publication of global flagship reports. We also support the establishment of the Habitat Agenda Task Manager System, designed to allow better monitoring and mutual reinforcement of actions taken by international agencies in support of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

67. Reaffirm our commitment to international cooperation as an essential element to implement the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda. In this regard, we invite the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on options for reviewing and strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and function of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), in accordance with the relevant decisions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Habitat II Conference;[14]

68. Agree to regularly review further implementation of the Habitat Agenda with a view to assessing progress and considering new initiatives.

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[13] The term "norm" refers to generally accepted standards, guidelines or principles, and should not be understood to imply that they are intended to be implemented through binding legal instruments.

[14] General Assembly resolutions 51/177 of 16 December 1996 and 53/242 of 28 July 1999, the agreed conclusions of the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council of 2000 (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/55/3/Rev.1), chap. V), and paras. 224 and 229 of the Habitat Agenda.

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